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Twilight and Firelight

By

Florence M. Miller

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MEMORIES' FIRESIDE.

To My Father

In the enfolding Twilight,
When the sun is sinking toward the West,
Silent the noise of the day,
Home and love call us at the hour of rest.

By the brightening Firelight,
Listening to the voices, sweet and clear,
Of life's olden memories,
We are seeking words of hope and cheer.

In the Twilight hour of life,
Stronger sounds the note of peace and love;
By the Firelight of the past,
Clearer grows the message from above.

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There Is A Place

There is a place where always shines a light,
How hard the day or dark the night;
Where someone watching and waiting I see,—
A light and a love just for me;
And this is Home.

There is a place where all life's heavy load,
The burden and heat of the road,
Are lifted for a time, and I find rest;
Here someone knows and hopes the best,
For this is Home.

There is a place,—I trust you know it well,
Where memory weaves its magic spell;
When low the evening shades are falling,
Happy scenes and hours recalling;
We name it Home.

There is a place where tears and sorrows cease
In a reign of infinite Peace;
Where all the cherished loves and hopes of earth,
Lost for a time, shall have new birth,—
This, too, is Home.

Hills Round About

Round thee, my city, quiet hills appear,
So clear and true in morning light,
They stand like sentinels of right,—
Thus girded, thou may nestle down without a fear.

At night how beautiful those hills do show,
When day's harsh noise and turmoil cease
And their heights just whisper peace,
In the evening's wondrous sunset glow.

Though far from thee we roam, we backward turn;
Like mother love at eventide,
Thy hills still beckon to thy side;
Below we seem to see the hearth fires burn.

Thy hills are like the men, that made thee, strong;
To make thee fair and great they fought,
Nor could they e'er for wrong be bought,
To old New England's faith and courage born.

So may we for the right still firmly stand;
To the old hills' traditions true;
Be our numbers many or few,
Faithfully lead the way, a loyal band.

Wayside Ministries

I heard the words one day, and then I felt
Within their depths a wondrous power beam;
In their meaning a charm and beauty dwelt,
But to me was given only a gleam.

Each hath his work to do, but one pauses still,
E'en to minister to another's woe,
The wayside cup of cold water to fill,
The wayside seeds of kindly thought to sow.

Wayside means a stopping in our pleasure,
Or our toil,—not the thing we plan to do;
It means not the giving of our treasure,
But ourselves unto the ministry true.

As we travel, by the wayside, meeting
Just by seeming chance the friend or stranger,
To help we must seize that moment fleeting,
As did the Christ of Bethlehem's manger.

A heart that is ever ready we need,
A strength and grace that is daily renewed,
A hand that's open the needy to feed
From a source with power freshly indued.

I Would Work

I would work in the world today,
For I see much to do,
And yet the hours are few,
As we travel along the way.

To work with ever growing zest,
The prize with joy to seek,
Nor yield or be so weak,
As fail to strive to do my best.

To win the praise of work well done,
I feel that I must strive,
That I full joy derive,
From completed work e'er set of sun.

An inward force I feel impel,
Some truer work to do;
Still to assay the new,
A voice calls, sweet as evening bell.

Ever the heights before I see;
I will not work in vain;
But more power will gain,
Nor e'er let fear my master be.

Exceeding great reward is known
By him, who doth assail,
A work that ne'er can fail,
Because worth doing and his own.

The Dreamer and the Gleaner

The dreamer sees a vision fair;
Before his eyes shines some far gleam,
To-day's trial to help him bear,
To bid him hope, and do, and dare;
And ever day by day doth seem
To him more wonderful that dream,
And clearer, brighter shines the gleam,
Until faith touches that vision fair.

The gleaner in life sees hope's ray
Shine, though darksome the fields may be,
And clouds hang heavy o'er the way;
What others leave he gleans each day,
And can in it rich promise see;
Fate ne'er quite o'erthrows such as he,
However dark and hard the way may be,
Still above him shines hope's bright ray.

Each walks the way as life's true Knight,
Gleaner and dreamer at heart are one;
To strongly battle for the right,
To live by faith and not by sight—
'Tis thus the highest work is done;
Though seems ofttimes prize there is none,
'Tis thus all victory is won,—
He, who dreams and gleans, crown as Knight.

A Day

God has given a day to you and me;
But God never gave that precious gift
Intending for us with the tide to drift.
He meant for us within that day to see,
To feel, to hear, to know, our spirit free;
He meant to have us gain, and push, and lift;
He would have us learn dross from gold to sift;
To live, and more and more our true selves be.

God gives to us, for love and hope, a day,—
All this we must have a real day to live.
And a day added, one by one, will give
To you and to me all of life's highway,—
Then tomorrow for us comes home and rest,
In the land where each day with all is blest.

Incomplete

Incompleteness in life and work is found
Everywhere to earth's remotest bound;
'Tis oft on earth the deepest, sadest thought,
With many struggle, pain, and sorrow fraught.
Faith, hope, and love our inspirations are,—
They lead us ever upward and afar;
But still the wish beckons above the deed,
Of our highest thought word is but the seed.

So all striving but increases longing here,
So we realize not the truth through fear:—
Incompleteness is heaven's sweetest thought,
With infinite power for growth 'tis fraught,—
Thus the measure of life's eternal scope,
The prophesy of everlasting hope.

Friendship

With some loyal friends we live side by side;
Our joys and sorrows through many a year
They share, and ever in our love abide;
We in their friendship day by day confide;
Their presence always gives hope and cheer;
Of their faith and truth we have ne'er a fear,—
Thus from beginning to end of each year,
We still travel life's path side by side.

With other friends we travel but a mile,
Yet in our hearts we bind their friendship fast;
Through time remains with us their cheering smile;
We count that little walk with them worth while;
Though we meet not, as the long years roll past,
Their living strength is of the things that last;
Memory holds them in our love so fast,
It seems as if they walked with us each mile.

In growing power both friends with us stay,—
The near friend whose love strengthens day by day,
The friend of the days of the long ago—
In both an ever-present help we know.

Just For You

'Tis just of you I am thinking to-night,
Of you, when rough the way and hard the fight,
And the path to follow untrod and long,
E'en though you still try to make sweet the song.

If the days are lonely and dark for you,
Just for you comes a little message true,—
There is someone, oppressed by care or fear,
Always needing your word or smile of cheer.

For you to give courage to face the load
Someone else is waiting on life's rough road;
Work may always be found on God's highway,—
Then out in the world get busy today.

To those in darkness stretch the helping hand;
Be strong thyself to answer each demand;
Surely in your life something someone needs;
Give, and for your own strength you sow the seeds.

The poorest and weakest hath joys to share;
Part of his neighbor's burden each can bear;
And, when another from our life is blest,
E'en our own life is led to truer rest.

In each life may be found more of joy bright,
Than of sorrow, if we read life aright,
If we live the whole, not the little part,
Ne'er from light of eternity depart.

Give Me A Thought

For so many a longsome night,
When the pain is waking,
Or the heart is aching,
Before the break of morning light.

Give me a little thought, I pray,
That it may rest impart,
And make the time depart,
When night is long e'er comes the day.

A thought is a bird on the wing;
Without reason or rhyme,
It soars to ev'ry clime,
Treasures from far-off lands to bring.

My thought to-night is poor and weak;
It will not soar away,
But round myself will play;
A thought from some great soul I seek.

A soul that did life's struggle know,
That ever bravely fought,
And left behind a thought,
With strength and courage all aglow.

For past all doubt this truth is sure,—
With untold power fraught
Is a beautiful thought,
To help to live and to endure.

Why hath God made the night so long?
Perchance e'er night is gone,
God's thoughts for men are born,—
Thus is brightened the morning song.

Service

I would serve the Master today;
There is so much to do,
And the servers are few,
As we travel along the way.

I would answer the Master's call;
The sorrowful would seek,
Strive to lift up the weak,
And comfort give to those that fall.

Follow Him in word and in deed;
The hungry must be fed;
The kindly word be said,
Forsooth sore and deep is the need.

But the Master's voice bade me,—"Take;
Thyself must truer be,
Must learn to feed on me;
Lift first thyself for others' sake."

At the Master's side with the few,
I would see the glory,
And so tell the story,
For my love of the service true.

Still would I follow the Master;
But now the road is bad,
And my own heart is sad,
My tears fall faster and faster.

Again I to the Master turn;
And his reply,—"To give,
Thou must above all live;
Thou must feel, and suffer, and learn."

The Little Touches

'Tis the little touches on the web of life
That make bitter discord end in peace,
That ease the daily fret, the toil, and strife,
And make love and joy in each increase.

As we meet, just a smile plays on the face,
And we never count how much the giving;
But in the heart it finds true resting-place;
Life without a smile is not worth living.

Only a tear, so frail and weak a thing;
Christ said: "Weep with those that weep,–then wept,
The touch of human sympathy to bring,
E'er speaking Word of Life to him that slept.

'Tis in passing the friendly word of cheer,
And the common flower beside the road,
That says,—" 'God's in His heaven;' Never fear;"
Then day is brighter and lighter the load.

Just a touch of true courtesy and grace,
Only a touch of faith, of hope, and love,—
One will win a higher place in life's race,
The other bring us to heaven above.

For the great things God needeth but a few;
But He sendeth to ev'ryone the call,
Each day, by the way, little things to do,—
Those acts that brighten and lighten, though small.

So, 'tis the little touches from day to day,
That will merit the Master's "Well done!"
When we meet at the turning of the way,
And at last the work of this life is done.

Each His Own

There is a race to run;
There is a line to cross;
There is a goal to reach, a prize to win,
As to home plate we one by one come in,
Either for gain or loss,
E'er sinks the evening sun,—
By others never known,
But each his own.

There is a song to sing;
There is a word to say;
There's a deed to do, a gift to bestow,
That in life may echo and ever grow,
As we go on our way,
With us our harvest bring,—
By others never known,
But each his own.

In life a truth to see;
In life a wondrous joy;
Also in life many burdens to bear,
Our load to lift, many a care to share;
A gold without alloy,
Only one's self to be,—
By others never known,
But each his own.

We have a love to give,
A hope to hold ever;
And each his own life to live—wondrous thought,
With such glory and power for us fraught,
There is a life to live
That should last forever,—
By others never known,
But each his own.

Why

A beauteous soul doth sink from our sight,
E'er it scarce life's battle begins to fight;
From that pain and loss ariseth a Knight,
Devotion's stainless armor shining bright.

The Knight fares forth e'en for the other's sake;
Through suffering made strong his task to take,
He does a work the two might never do,
And becomes one of the immortal few.

Was his that great accomplishment alone,
Or by his side did someone work unknown;
Unspoken memory his love increase,
Give sympathy, faith, hope that could not cease?

Stricken on life's field some great soul we see,
One who e'er more sore handicapped must be,
Weak and frail in body, yet brave and true,
Of those, whose work dies not, becomes he, too.

Men wonder why thought for others is born
In human hearts, and love of self is gone,—
Helpful pioneers first know weary nights,
Themselves have climbed to Calvary's far heights.

Standing there, ne'er again to be the same,
They may sink to earth or win place and name,
That, small or great in men's sight, is sublime
In God's annals through all eons of time.

Why doth lead the path so dark and lowly,
Also to the path so high and holy?
We here know not; we live, our spirits fanned
By the hope that some day we'll understand.

Still a glimpse of light e'en now we may see,—
'Twere not strange for well and happy strong to be;
But by choosing the stricken, weak, and low
God the divine power in man doth show.

For suffering forces man with God to stay;
Alone he thinks high thoughts with Him each day;
For a space waits; then, if the pain be deep,
Goes forth his tryst with suffering to keep.

Ask Of Life

I ask of life and Thee!
I ask to live as the bird on the wing;
To soar above common and low,
That would draw to the depths below;
To earth and heaven my song of joy sing,—
And Thou grantest a song to me.

I ask of life and Thee!
I ask to live as doth the flower fair,
Beauteous color deep within,
From evil free, and pure from sin,—
So nourished ever by thy tender care,
Thou wilt let me a flower be.

I ask of life and Thee!
I ask to live as doth the little brook;
Refreshing e'en the blade of grass;
With strength uplifting all that pass,
Although I live in quiet, shady nook;
And so that life flows on I see.

I ask of life and Thee!
Greater and greater blessings day by day;
That, when each evening's sun shall sink
To rest, my grateful heart may think,—
I, not alone breathed, but I lived today.
So in larger life I am free.

I ask of life and Thee!
I ask a life worth living forever,
Still more from life each day I live,
A deeper life and more to give,
Bonds 'twixt me and life that naught can sever,—
Then Thou givest thy life to me.

Life

Boring for gold down in the earth,
Where ne'er a noble thought has birth,
There is the life, as of a mole,
Breathing, living, without a soul.

Nestling down as doth the gentle dove,
In the heart there is life of love,
Giving at all times peace and rest,
And making life forever blest.

The life that to life is giving,
'Tis the only life worth living;
Only what we put into life,
Makes the worth of the daily strife.

Lost the cord of self in loving,
The life that gives all is living;
It can face the world with a smile,
And always make a life worth while.

As rivers freely do bestow,
And moisture back to them doth flow;
So 'tis the help we freely show,
That sweetly to more life will grow.

A clasp of friendship, faithful, strong,
Ever echoes where once 'tis born;
And seeds of hope and truth, once sown,
In life forevermore are known.

Cords from above, heaven-riven,
From nature within, God-given;
Cords of true life, ever living,
Birth of new life, ever loving;

For life striving, sowing, growing;
In life self-effacing, loving;
To life the best service giving,—
Cords that make the perfect living.

A Christmas Song

Sing o'er and o'er again the wondrous birth;
Sing the glorious morn,
Bringing new joy and hope to all the earth,
Whereon the Christ was born.

Sing of the watching shepherds on the hills;
While angels hush their fears,
They hear the message that the hope fulfills
Of Israel's long years.

Sing of God's present, ever-living love,
To all, both near and far;
Tell the precious tidings from above,
Proclaimed by golden star.

Of that faith sing, in the sweet mother's face,
And the lowly manger,
Where first the holy Babe found resting place,—
There a kingly stranger.

Sing of the gifts of gold the Wisemen brought,
Following far the light;
The hope-fulfilling sight the shepherds sought,
Leaving their flocks by night.

A kingdom rises that shall for aye increase,
From glory unto glory;
With trust sing of a coming day of Peace,
Once the angels' story.

Faith, hope, love, peace,—gifts that shall abide,
The never-ending song,
From the Father thine, whate'er betide,
Given when Christ was born.

Oh Child Of Bethlehem

Oh Child of Bethlehem !
Once more look down upon us from above;
Vouchsafe again to show thy wondrous love.
Speak Thou the word that casts out fear;
Upon this ever holy night,
Oh Child of Bethlehem,
To every tempted child of earth draw near;
Help them for Thee to win the age-long fight.

Oh Child of Bethlehem !
Once again bend low, with such touch divine,
As Bethlehem's star once shone forth the sign;
To high, to low, to near, to far,
Proclaim thy power still the same;
Oh Child of Bethlehem,
Grant us again to see that radiant star,
Exalt once more in all the world thy name.

Oh Child of Bethlehem !
Do Thou into the hearts of mothers steal,
A holy babe, true motherhood reveal;
And grant them faith that they may see
That Thou all mother's pains would share,
Oh Child of Bethlehem,
For Thou once lay upon a mother's knee,
Cradled by human "love and tender care."

Oh Child of Bethlehem !
To all the weary world once more speak peace;
In good-will bid cruel hate and turmoil cease;
On those oppressed by sin and shame,
On those o'erpower'd in the strife,
Oh Child of Bethlehem,
Bestow forgiveness which they may not claim,
And daily save to more abundant life.

Oh Child of Bethlehem !
Once more the tender word of comfort speak,
As when Thou walked on earth, to those that seek;
Thy quiet voice of power saves,
If we but listen at thy side;
Oh Child of Bethlehem,
As long ago Thou stilled the raging waves,
So guide us into calms that aye abide.

Oh Child of Bethlehem !
Once more look down upon us from above;
Vouchsafe again to show thy wondrous love;
Grant now to earth a holy night,
Let angels sing, as at thy birth;
Oh Child of Bethlehem,
Through clouds let break for us the golden light
Of God's glory, with Peace, Good-will on Earth.

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